1:Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1952
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II. HABITATION

361 [592] [777] The original Tukuna habitation was a large, isolated, communal dwelling, *maloca*, occupied by more than one family. All settlements made up of a number of houses together, like Tabatinga, São José do Javary, and Caldeirão, owe their origin to Neobrazilian initiative and were so contrary to tribal custom that the complaint was always heard that the Tukuna did not want to be herded together but would spread out again through the jungle.

[611] [591] I have often been told by the Indians themselves that in such or such a place there was once a great maloca of this or that clan. I do not know how to interpret this statement, for though the clans of the Tukuna are patrilineal, the family is more matrilocal than patrilocal, so that only in very special circumstances would all the men of one maloca belong to the same clan. However, the clan te'ma (Burity)—if, as tradition says, its members once spoke a language different from that of the other clans—might have been collectively localized.

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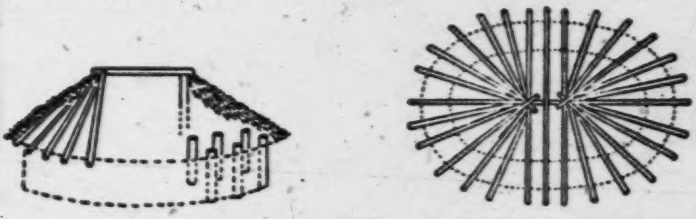

a *b*

Fig. 1. Maloca or communal dwelling. *a*. Sketch showing roof and interior construction. *b*. Plan of rafters.

Houses

These houses were apparently circular; actually, however, there was always a small, rectangular central section, with a semicircular roof bay at each end (fig. 1). The rafters of this rectangular section, which formerly was only some two or three meters long, rested on a short ridgepole supported by pillars or posts. At each end, a little below the ridgepole and in the angles formed by the two outer pairs of rafters, there was a small horizontal crossbeam fastened to the rafters, and upon this rested the rafters of the roof bay (fig. 1, *b*).

Two series of vertical supports divided the interior into two concentric parts, the inner series—at least, the highest and strongest—being of *acapú* wood. The [824] house was covered with *caranã* thatching, the stems being intertwined and attached to a long lath of *paxiuba*[1] wood. The tips of the leaves were split and were also intertwined. The laths with the thatching attached were tied horizontally on the rafters with strips of the inner bark. For the first three or four years, at least, this covering was an absolutely impermeable protection from the tropical rains.

The walls, more or less the height of a man, were made of small poles of paxiuba wood, or of the same material as the roof. In a few houses the interstices were filled

[1] An exceedingly tough Amazonian palm (*Socratea exorrhiza*), the roots of which are so thorny that they are used to scrape manioc roots.

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593 I have occasionally referred and the excesses committed during drunkenness, though characteristic of these people, do not seriously alter the general picture.
592 Among the inhabitants of a house, who are always of the same family, the authority of the father or of the grandfather is supreme, being recognized in an argument, without dispute. The mother or grandmother shares in this authority, especially in the treatment of the daughters. The old man is the owner of the house, though others may have contributed to its construction. If he wishes to move to another locality, all accompany him, even if they are dead set against it.

592 The inhabitants of neighboring houses are generally in some way related, perhaps representing today the ancient communal dwelling. They share their necessities and likewise distribute any surplus among themselves, always in the most intimate sociability. The diagram (fig. 12) shows the composition of one of these

[614] [616]

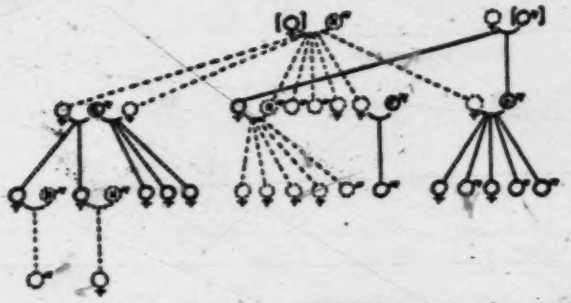

Fig. 12. Clan relationships. Dotted circle, Clan čiva' = saringarana = a'i = onça. Solid line circle, Clan ãu/nę' = matum fava.

local groupings of related families, comprising three houses with thirty-two inhabitants. Note that A marries the sister of B, and B marries the sister of A. C marries successively two sisters of A; his two sons-in-law live with him; and F, another brother-in-law, lives with A. The group is therefore composed of sons, sons-in-law, grandsons, and great-grandsons of X, deceased.

736 589 *Widows and orphans.*—In these groups, widows and orphans always find the necessary shelter. A certain widow living with her daughters of thirteen and fifteen years old apparently has her economic life perfectly balanced. The three females plant in the clearing which they themselves are able to clear of undergrowth with a machete; they make farinha; they fish; and they make tucum fiber hammocks for sale. A married son, who lives close by, helps them whenever necessary. Small orphans are adopted by an uncle or aunt, who bring them up with [587] their own children. Formerly, also, the levirate often relieved the situation of a widow and her children. A widower alone with his small children is in a less favorable economic situation; his place is always in a run-down condition, and the children, during the necessary absences of their father, naturally try to make up to the neighboring relatives. Sooner or later, the widower either remarries or, following the example of his sons, moves in with the family of a relative. This is an outstanding demonstration of the economic importance of the Tukuna woman.